OPEN Arms

2000 * Vol 12 Number

P.O. Box 845 Mishawaka, IN 46546

During the recent National Women's Music Festival (June 22 – June 25) at Ball State Univ. in Muncie, IN, I had the pleasure of hearing Holly Near speak. Many of you may ask who is Holly Near? Holly was one of the founders/leaders of the Feminist Movement out of which women's music was born in the early 1970's. She spoke about how we are always in a constant state of change: the moon is changing, seasons are changing, our bodies are changing and our culture is always changing. When we are young we know no fear. We do things because they feel right and it's fun. Our mothers and grandmothers don't know it all. As we get older many of us think we know what should be and the best way to do it. After all we have done, we should know how to do it. Holly says we have to allow the young the opportunity to recreate the wheel, but they need to do it for themselves. They have to experience it for themselves. They will not accept mom's way of doing it; therefore, we as older women have to become supporters and cheerleaders and teachers. We have built a foundation but now we need to be the support for the young to grow and further our community and culture.

Holly's talk really hit home with the current status of Open Arms. Open Arms has been in the Michiana area for over 10 years. We are financially stable and have a solid base of approximately 130 subscribers. Open Arms has been through many changes and challenges. The committee has had major changes in staff participants three or four times, major decisions and hard feelings about what should and what should not be included, and how different issues should be handled. Our readers have wide and diverse interests so we developed a Mission Statement to deal with that diversity.

Over the past year or so, changes have continued. Third Friday night out was discontinued due to lack of leadership and interest. No one has shown an interest in hosting pot lucks though many would like to attend. Our community events are few and far between and while the Open Arms committee has attempted to have meetings to talk about where to go from here, there has been no interest or participation. The foundation is here, but the energy of the few involved has up and left. I can remember our first community organized canoe trip down the river. There were over 20+ women who participated. What energy and community!

We are facing a problem with Open Arms. If more women don't step forward to support by helping with typing, writing, etc., Open Arms will become history. If we don't hear from anyone by August 15 then we will end. If interested, call 219/271-0338 or 219/246-1195. If no answer, leave your name, phone # and a short message and we will get back to you. If we have to disband, we will decide how to reimburse subscription fees as best as possible.

PLEASE – take a minute and remember how you found out about our Lesbian community. How did you meet your friends? How are we going to keep fighting bigger issues, i.e. Gay adoption, partner insurance, equal rights, it we can't keep our own community informed? How is a new sister in town going to find community, or someone just finding their own identity going to find support. If you don't have the time or energy, please pass the word to a friend that may not even know about Open Arms.

WE NEED HELP NOW TO CONTINUE!!!!